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OPTIONS FOR U.S. POLICY ON TERRORISM,(U)
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Options for U.S. Policy on Terrorism

Gail Bass, Brian M. Jenkins, Konrad Kellen, David Ronfeldt
with the assistance of Joyce Peterson

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PREFACE

The Rand Corporation has engaged in research on terrorism since 1972. Knowing that the U.S. government faces complex issues in developing effective anti-terrorist policies and capabilities in the aftermath of the Iranian hostage incident, we believed that our research could provide insights into these issues. Thus we summarized our relevant findings and conclusions in a policy paper addressed to Secretary of State Alexander Haig in March 1981. Subsequent events have reinforced many of the paper's conclusions. Therefore, we are issuing them in a Rand report so that they may be made available for distribution to government and military planners. (This distribution does not, of course, imply Secretary Haig's endorsement.)

Although Rand provided support for preparation of this report from its own research funds, we wish to acknowledge the government agencies who supported much of the research summarized here. They include the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the Defense Nuclear Agency, Sandia Laboratories, and the Departments of Commerce, Energy, Justice, and State.

Brian M. Jenkins, Director
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SUMMARY

This report presents a synthesis of policy-relevant conclusions and recommendations from three areas of Rand's continuing research on terrorism: (1) response to hostage situations, (2) use of force against terrorism, and (3) the long-term campaign against terrorism. Our purpose is to provide insights that may clarify policy issues and inform policy decisions.

Among the issues the government must consider in formulating an anti-terrorist policy are

- The trends in hostage situations.
- The interaction between policy for dealing with hostage incidents and overall policy on terrorism.
- The advantages and risks of countering terrorist action with force.
- The future threat of terrorism.

In addition to discussing these issues, this report recommends means of improving the response to terrorist incidents and developing effective long-term strategies against terrorism.

Our strongest recommendation concerns the need for international agreements. The U.S. government has a pressing incentive to combat international terrorism and may have an unprecedented opportunity to enlist the cooperation of other countries. The seizure of the U.S. embassy in Teheran highlighted what statistics have shown for several years: U.S. citizens and facilities have been the targets of almost one-third of the international terrorist incidents. The world community at large was concerned about the Iranian incident and generally supported the U.S. position. We believe that the United States should take advantage of this consensus and try to forge international agreements against terrorism.

The issue here is not one of politics but of the traditions and laws that permit the conduct of diplomacy even among adversaries. Because of its international nature, terrorism cannot be controlled without international agreements. Force, repressive laws, and draconian practices are alternatives, but they threaten the quality of life in democratic societies almost as much as does terrorism itself.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

January 20, 1981, saw the release of the American hostages by Iran and the beginning of a new administration in Washington. Although the new administration had to deal only with the aftermath of the Iranian situation, it had to face the fact that, in policy and in practice, the U.S. government had been unprepared to cope with this kind of terrorist episode. Unless the new administration established more effective responsive measures and developed the capabilities to make them work, it might find itself equally unprepared to handle future terrorist crises.

Although the level of terrorist activity oscillates from year to year, the trend over the last 12 years has been unmistakably upward. As the number of incidents has increased, terrorism has also become more severe: Terrorists have acquired new capabilities and demonstrated a greater willingness to kill. Perhaps even more disturbing, a number of governments have become their accomplices.

The seizure of the U.S. embassy in Teheran dramatically demonstrated what statistics have shown for several years: In a world of growing terrorism, the United States heads the target list. American citizens or facilities have been the targets of approximately one-third of all the international terrorist incidents.

The Iranian episode also raised a number of issues regarding the U.S. response to individual terrorist incidents and to terrorism in general. It is clear that the United States must develop a tough, consistent program for combating international terrorism, enlisting the cooperation of other nations. This does not mean the establishment of a fixed-response policy to serve in every terrorist incident. Although there seem to be patterns and trends in terrorist activities, variations in adversaries, tactics, and targets make each incident unique, requiring creative and flexible government response. A flexible policy in hostage situations need not imply suspension of a firm overall policy to fight terrorism.

This report presents a synthesis of the most policy-relevant conclusions and recommendations from three areas of Rand's continuing research on terrorism: (1) response to hostage situations, (2) use of force against terrorism, and (3) the long-term campaign against terrorism. Our purpose is to provide insights that may clarify policy issues and inform policy decisions.

II. OPTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO HOSTAGE SITUATIONS

Terrorists seize hostages because they want to draw attention to themselves and because they believe they can increase their coercive power by placing human life in the balance. The record indicates how effective they believe this tactic is: hostage episodes (kidnappings, embassy seizures, airline hijackings) have comprised one-third of all the international terrorist incidents since 1968.[1] This problem has special urgency for the U.S government because American officials and other citizens figure in more than one-third of all the hostage incidents. In developing policies to deal with hostage situations, government and military officials will have to consider trends and patterns in hostage-taking, the issues surrounding policy alternatives, and the ramifications of using force.

Trends and Patterns in Hostage-Taking

Although terrorists have seized U.S. officials and citizens in numerous incidents, direct demands were made on the United States in only three of the international hostage incidents involving U.S. citizens between 1968 and 1975.[2] Terrorists have typically directed their demands at the local governments, seeking leverage over them through the pressure they expected the United States to exert for concessions. A recent Rand study shows that 4 of the 48 embassies seized between 1971 and 1980 were U.S. embassies, but only in Iran did the terrorists make demands directly on the United States. Although U.S. personnel were among the hostages in three other embassy seizures, demands were made on the United States in only one case, and these proved secondary to the terrorists' main concern.[3]

[1] Data from a Rand chronology of international terrorism since 1968. CIA statistics show a lower percentage of hostage incidents because the CIA data base includes threats and a greater number of token acts of violence.

[2] Brian M. Jenkins, Janera Johnson, and David Ronfeldt, *Numbered Lives: Some Statistical Observations From 77 International Hostage Episodes*, The Rand Corporation, P-5905, July 1977.

[3] American diplomats were among the hostages seized in the Saudi Arabian embassy in Khartoum (1973), the Venezuelan consulate in the Dominican Republic (1974), and the Dominican embassy in Bogotá (1980). In Khartoum, Black September terrorists demanded, among other things, the release of Sirhan Sirhan (the convicted assassin of Robert Kennedy). See Brian M. Jenkins, *Embassies Under Siege: A Review of 48 Embassy Takeovers, 1971-1980*, The Rand Corporation, January 1981, pp.10, 28.

Even when foreign nationals are among the victims, the local government has primary responsibility for managing a hostage situation. Because these incidents create domestic political crises, local governments usually resist any foreign pressure once an incident is under way. Foreign nationals were kidnapped by terrorists in Guatemala, Uruguay, and Haiti, but in each case the local government resisted outside pressures.[4] The United States unsuccessfully recommended that Uruguay grant concessions to guerrillas who seized U.S. officials in 1970, and West Germany failed in its attempt to exert pressure on the Guatemalan government, also in 1970, when Guatemalan leftists kidnapped the West German ambassador. Haiti's resistance took a different form: The Haitian government acceded to kidnappers' demands in exchange for the release of U.S. officials before learning of the U.S. government's no-concessions policy but refused the subsequent U.S. request to alter their position.

If foreign governments cannot always be counted on to obtain the release of hostages, how can the United States protect its personnel abroad? The pattern of embassy seizures indicates that heavy security may deter takeover attempts, although we cannot be sure of this. The United States, United Kingdom, Israel, West Germany, and France have been the targets of half of all the international terrorist attacks to date,[5] yet their embassies and consulates figure in only one-fourth of the embassy seizures. This seeming disparity may reflect the fact that, having so often been targets, these countries have made their embassies veritable fortresses. However, if terrorists find embassies too hard to attack, they are likely to turn to other, less-protected targets.[6]

[4] In Uruguay, Tupamaro guerrillas—members of the National Liberation Front—kidnapped two U.S. advisers, Dan Mitrione and Claude Fly. The guerrillas demanded release of prisoners and publication of manifestos in exchange for the U.S. advisers. Then-President Jorge Pacheco refused any communication with, much less concessions to, the kidnappers. Mitrione was murdered on August 10, 1970, ten days after his capture; Fly was seized on August 7, 1970, and released March 2, 1971, after suffering a severe heart attack.

In Guatemala, leftist guerrillas kidnapped West German Ambassador Karl von Spreti on March 30, 1970, demanding release of prisoners for his safe return. Previously, the Guatemalan government had promptly acceded to kidnappers' demands, but despite strong pressure from the West German government, it rejected these demands. The kidnappers murdered von Spreti on April 5, 1970.

In Haiti, kidnappers seized U.S. Ambassador Clinton Knox and Consul General Ward Christensen on January 23, 1973, demanding a large ransom and prisoner release. Working through diplomatic intermediaries, the Haitian government agreed to the kidnappers' demands. When the U.S. government suggested that Haiti renege on the agreement, the Haitian government refused, having given its word to the intermediaries.

[5] According to Rand's chronology of international terrorism since 1968.

[6] Jenkins, *Embassies Under Siege*, pp.19-20.

Seizing embassies and kidnapping diplomats have thus far proved to be reasonably effective and not necessarily perilous tactics, but the risk of failure seems to be increasing. Terrorists can still count on publicity, but not on other payoffs. A Rand study of 77 hostage situations between 1968 and 1975 found that terrorists' demands were fully met in 33 percent of the 60 cases in which they were made. In only 20 percent of those cases were hostage-takers captured or killed.[7] In contrast, a subsequent Rand study of 48 embassy seizures between 1971 and 1980 found that terrorists' demands were fully met in less than 17 percent of the cases and that terrorists were captured or killed in 49 percent of the cases where they made demands.[8]

Even when their demands are not fully met, terrorists seldom murder their hostages. But what do they do when *all* of their demands are rejected? This happened in 16 of the 77 hostage incidents, and in 5 cases, some hostages were executed.[9] All demands were rejected in 8 of the 48 embassy seizures, and in 3 cases, some hostages were executed.

The record indicates that the longer hostage-and-barricade episodes last, the more often hostages come out alive—and episodes have been getting longer as governments increasingly refuse to meet terrorists' demands. However, this is not to suggest that "waiting it out" ensures the safe release of hostages. Furthermore, lengthy incidents also paralyze governments by focusing their energies and resources on a single concern.

Policy Issues

Governments inevitably balance competing objectives in dealing with a hostage situation. They may want to (1) appear in control, (2) make no concessions, (3) end the situation swiftly, (4) save the hostages, (5) apprehend the terrorists, (6) minimize political damage, and (7) avoid appearing callous and inhumane. During the course of an episode, these objectives may shift, making it difficult to maintain a single policy line.

The United States has three basic policy alternatives for dealing with hostage situations: flexible response, safe release, and no concessions.

[7] Jenkins et al., *Numbered Lives*, pp. 20 and 23.

[8] Jenkins, *Embassies Under Siege*, pp. 15-16.

[9] Jenkins et al., *Numbered Lives*, p.28. In these 16 cases, demands were explicitly rejected during negotiation. In 10 other cases, government action against the terrorists implied rejection.

A *flexible-response policy* provides the least clear guidelines and makes the greatest demands on those responding to the situation. However, it permits possibly important tactical maneuvers, such as entering into communications and negotiations and making minor concessions (e.g., publicity) in order to play for time. With such tactics, negotiators can increase public pressure on the captors to release the hostages, gain information that may enable the terrorists to be apprehended later on, or achieve other objectives that may be judged more important than maintaining a consistent policy.

A *safe-release policy* provides clear policy guidelines and a humanitarian image but could encourage future political kidnappings. A government committed to a policy of safe release tries to obtain quick return of hostages by meeting the kidnappers' demands, which typically include release of prisoners, monetary ransom, and publication or broadcast of manifestos. Because most governments are reluctant to make such extensive concessions, many have tried some version of the Bangkok solution, i.e., guaranteeing the terrorists safe passage out of the country, in lieu of other demands, in exchange for the safe release of the hostages.[10]

A *strict no-concessions policy* also provides clear guidelines. It may also convey a strong image and deter future incidents, but it may not be credible to terrorists and it may not prove tenable in every situation. Further, such a policy inhibits flexibility and could endanger the hostages. Finally, a government risks loss of face and of credibility if it relaxes a stated no-concessions policy during an incident.

Even if a government adheres rigorously to a no-concessions policy, is it an effective deterrent? The evidence is meager and unconvincing:

- Changes in U.S. policy have not correlated with the number of U.S. officials kidnapped. The government has moved from a safe-release to a no-concessions to a (somewhat) flexible policy with little evident effect. In general, the taking of U.S. hostages has followed international trends.
- Terrorists' responses in Latin America and the Middle East give no indication that a no-concessions policy is an effective deterrent, nor is there any evidence to show that governments encourage future kidnappings by occasionally granting some concessions.
- Even if terrorist groups know or care what the policy is, there are sufficient precedents to make them believe that a no-concessions

[10] On December 28, 1972, four Black September terrorists seized the Israeli embassy in Bangkok, demanding the release of Arab guerrillas imprisoned in Israel. After 18 hours of negotiation, Thai officials and the Egyptian ambassador persuaded the terrorists to drop this demand and release their 12 hostages in exchange for safe passage out of the country—hence, the term "Bangkok solution."

policy will be changed in their cases.[11] For example, Israeli officials admit they would probably have yielded had they judged the rescue attempt at Entebbe infeasible.

- Terrorists not only take hostages, they also assassinate, bomb, and launch armed attacks. A no-concessions policy could actually drive terrorists to rely more heavily on those tactics.

Policy statements appear to be the weakest deterrent to hostage-taking. Political kidnappings potentially offer enough other rewards (publicity, confrontation), even in the absence of concessions, to make them attractive to terrorists. Increased security may have some deterrent effect for specific targets, but it has not proved insurmountable to determined groups—and, as we have said, it may encourage other tactics. *The strongest deterrent seems to be a government's demonstrated will and ability to capture and kill terrorists and destroy their organizations.*[12] That ability is seriously constrained, of course, when terrorists are operating outside the nation's boundaries.

We believe that demonstrated will should be the basis for the broad U.S. anti-terrorist policy discussed below. The policy for hostage incidents may be separated from that general policy. A flexible-response policy toward individual hostage incidents need not inhibit, and could enhance, the government's long-term campaign against terrorism.

Use of Force

A flexible policy in hostage situations does not rule out the use of force. If a government tolerates, abets, or engages in hostage seizures, military force may be threatened or used to coerce that government's compliance with international standards of behavior. Force may also be used in rescue operations. However, past incidents indicate that armed rescues are last-resort, long-shot measures. The risk of failure is high, especially in attempts on foreign territory, and the danger for the hostages is great. That danger may be even greater now that terrorists have come to expect such attempts.

[11] Colombia, the United States, and Italy have all had no-concessions policies. Yet, each has met terrorists' demands in particular cases. Colombia eventually acceded to scaled-down demands made by guerrillas who seized the Dominican embassy in Bogotá. The United States agreed to unfreeze Iranian assets in return for the American hostages held in Iran. (Some argue that this did not constitute a concession, since the assets had been frozen in reprisal for the hostage incident.) When terrorists seized Giovanni D'Urso, one of Italy's top magistrates, they demanded that a special jail holding terrorists be closed. The government did close the prison, although it claimed to have planned that action before the kidnapping.

[12] Jenkins et al., *Numbered Lives*, pp. 28-32.

Such considerations may account for the fact that governments have seldom used force when the lives of foreign diplomats were at stake. In only 2 of the 48 embassy seizures between 1971 and 1980 did the local government order assaults. In January 1980, Guatemalan police stormed the Spanish embassy, which was being held by armed militants. During the assault, a fire broke out, killing 32 of the 33 hostage-takers, but also killing 7 of the 8 hostages. As a result of this abortive attempt, Spain broke diplomatic relations with Guatemala. In March 1980, Iranian terrorists took over the Iranian embassy in London. After the terrorists murdered two of their hostages and threatened to kill others, British commandos stormed the embassy and successfully rescued the remaining hostages.[13]

Governments have likewise seldom viewed armed rescue as an option when their citizens were held by terrorists in another country. Armed rescue attempts would be appropriate only under particular circumstances: when the local government could not carry out its international obligations because of domestic political strife; when the local government refused to carry out those obligations, allying itself with the terrorists; or when, for some reason, the local government invited foreign forces to carry out the assault. Except in Iran, the United States probably could not have used force in episodes in which U.S. diplomats were held hostage.

Only five governments have attempted armed rescues abroad: Israel at Entebbe, Germany at Mogadishu, Egypt at Larnaca, the United States in Iran, and Indonesia at Bangkok. The attempts at Entebbe, Mogadishu, and Bangkok succeeded. At Larnaca, Egyptian commandos ended up in a firefight with Cypriot forces. And the United States failed in Iran. It should also be noted that Mogadishu and Bangkok were permissive environments;[14] of the three attempts in non-permissive environments, only the raid on Entebbe succeeded.

In addition to the risks of rescues being aborted or of rescuers ending up in a fight with local forces, governments must consider the danger hostages face in armed rescue attempts. The Rand review of 77 hostage incidents found that 79 percent of the hostages who died were killed during rescue attempts.[15] We cannot know, of course, how many hostages would have been killed by their captors if no rescue attempts had been ordered. However, as more armed rescues are attempted, hostage-takers may prepare for them, increasing the risks for hostages. Initial statements by Americans returning from Iran

[13] Jenkins, *Embassies Under Siege*, p.19.

[14] By "permissive" we mean that the would-be rescuers have permission from the country in which the operation will take place.

[15] Jenkins et al., *Numbered Lives*, p.27.

indicate that if the rescue attempt had not been aborted, it might have taken a heavy toll among the hostages.

Despite the risks of failure and of danger to hostages, armed rescues may become necessary when negotiations fail and terrorists seem ready to kill. If sieges grow longer because governments resist the demands of hostage-takers, pressures to make armed rescue attempts will increase. As a matter of fact, a review of major hostage incidents over the past ten years shows that governments are increasingly willing to order assaults to end hostage situations both at home and abroad. This trend reflects a growing resistance to meeting terrorists' demands. It may also reflect some governments' growing confidence that specially trained units can succeed in these missions.

If, as discussed in the following section, more governments begin not only to support terrorist tactics but also to use them openly, and the international community fails to impose effective sanctions, military force may become the only alternative.

III. THE LONG-TERM CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERRORISM

It is the nature of terrorism to command attention during a dramatic incident and then quickly recede into the background, allowing public and official concern to subside. As a result, terrorists have repeatedly caught governments with their defensive guards down. A government's chances of prevailing at such a time may be severely limited. True, every terrorist incident is different and each may require different, *ad hoc* responses. Nevertheless, those responses can be most effective only if the government's anti-terrorist machinery is continually maintained in high gear.

This is not to imply that the government need maintain only defensive mechanisms. It is also necessary to develop more imaginative and effective long-term offensive strategies against terrorism. These should include the forging of international agreements, and possibly the pursuit of fugitive terrorists or the use of hostage incidents as justification for attacking terrorists' training camps. While both offensive and defensive measures are necessary, the low probability of a decisive victory over a small and elusive terrorist enemy may make better defenses more effective than offensive measures in the fight against terrorism.

If the U.S. government can develop effective long-term strategies for security, intelligence, contingency planning, crisis management, military preparation, and international agreements, it may ultimately heighten the terrorists' risks and lower their potential gains enough to deter terrorist activities. If it cannot develop those strategies, the future may hold an ever-more-virulent terrorist threat.

The Future Threat

Present trends give some indication of terrorism's future course and make contingency planning imperative:

- Terrorism will persist as a mode of political expression. More nations may adopt terrorist tactics, employ terrorist groups, or exploit terrorist incidents as a way to wage surrogate warfare against their enemies. By assassinating dissident nationals and other foes living in foreign nations, countries such as Libya, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Bulgaria, Chile, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia have joined the trend toward state-sponsored terrorism.

- The Soviet bloc will undoubtedly continue to support terrorist groups around the world, since Soviet policy endorses open support of "national liberation organizations." For subnational groups not so classified, the Soviet Union may channel support through satellite countries or other terrorist groups.
- Terrorist groups will probably continue to wage their campaigns for foreign causes on U.S. soil or against U.S. targets abroad. Exile groups living in the United States may use this country as a base for terrorist operations against their own countries' governments.
- Terrorists may use or threaten to use nuclear, chemical, or biological materials. Although there is no evidence that known terrorist groups are about to threaten or commit mass murder, changing circumstances could make the use of mass-destruction materials more likely. These materials could be used to extort extraordinary political concessions, and even a well-perpetrated hoax involving such materials could endanger public safety.

Government Response to Terrorism

What can the government do to improve its machinery for responding to terrorist incidents and to develop effective long-term strategies against terrorism? On the basis of Rand's research on terrorism, we have reached the following conclusions:

1. *Anti-terrorist machinery should be built to serve the President effectively in his deliberations during a major terrorist crisis.* Although it has been argued that anti-terrorist policy and procedures should be isolated from the White House in order to keep the President from being involved in terrorist episodes, recent history shows that major terrorist incidents always reach the Oval Office very quickly. As episodes grow longer, they become more complex and difficult to manage. The machinery should be redesigned with this in mind. The suggestions below concern some possible features of the design.

2. *The present interagency structure should continue to function, but its functioning should be enhanced by the addition of a permanent staff and by giving the group greater resources and a stronger charter.* The existing machinery suffers from all the disabilities of a committee. A permanent staff could give full-time attention to planning, developing, and maintaining U.S. capabilities to anticipate, prevent, and combat terrorism, and to increase the government's effectiveness in dealing with major incidents. Such a staff would alleviate demands on the President's energy and time during a protracted episode. A stronger charter for the present interagency structure would enable them to be more effective in developing a coherent government strategy, to

coordinate and approve interagency planning, to advise the President on the allocation of counterterrorism resources, and to monitor and assess U.S. preparedness.[16]

3. *Intelligence can and must be improved.* Collection of information about terrorist groups and their activities is inherently difficult, but more can be done with analysis. In their investigations of potential threats to nuclear facilities, Rand researchers have developed techniques for analyzing documents produced by terrorists. By applying various forms of psycholinguistic, psychiatric, and substantive analysis to these documents, we have developed profiles of particular groups' "mindsets," which give indirect indications of their future targets. Work in these areas, although preliminary, appears very promising. Conclusions based on analysis of the documents compare favorably with conclusions reached by intelligence agencies who have an intimate knowledge of the same groups.

The government could also benefit from the development of a model for analyzing intelligence data on the Soviets' terrorist links. To understand the Soviet role in international terrorism more fully, further research is needed on (1) how the Soviets classify various terrorist groups, (2) how the Soviets perceive the benefits and risks of direct and indirect support to these groups, and (3) what levers other nations might use to influence Soviet policy on terrorism.

4. *Security does work and should be strengthened at U.S. facilities.* U.S. facilities both at home and abroad need comprehensive systems that have more than the hardware, gates, and guards necessary to deter or prevent takeovers. Such systems would improve the government's capabilities to respond to a terrorist attack, provide greater opportunities for hostages to escape or retake their facility, and increase a rescue attempt's chances of success. Security measures would involve preplaced hardware, along with procedures and training to be called into play when a facility was seized by terrorists. The hardware options might include remote-control monitoring of embassies that would alert the government to any takeover attempt and keep the crisis-management team continuously aware of conditions and changes inside a captured facility, or weapons and communications equipment whose existence and location within the facility are known only to designated officials who could activate and use them in the event of a takeover. Rand has explored this area in research conducted for the Department of Energy and Sandia Laboratories on the possible takeover of U.S. nuclear facilities.

[16] A step in this direction was taken in March 1981 when the President designated Vice President George Bush as chairman of a newly formed White House crisis-management team, which presumably would handle major terrorist incidents that required White House attention. The issue of a permanent staff has not yet been resolved.

5. *The United States' capabilities for carrying out rescues abroad and at home should be reviewed and strengthened.* The failure of the U.S. rescue mission in Iran has already raised questions about America's competence—and not merely its competence to carry out rescue operations. The only thing more disastrous for the U.S. image than another failure abroad would be a failure at home. The United States does have many capabilities, including specially trained units, for responding to terrorist incidents, but these capabilities are scattered through the armed services. The government needs an inventory of its anti-terrorist capabilities, including a review of federal agency and civilian resources that might be called upon in special circumstances. This inventory should be compared with a list of scenarios that could compel a U.S. government response in order to identify and locate any gaps in those capabilities.

6. *The government should seek international anti-terrorist agreements similar to the current anti-hijacking agreements.* The existing anti-hijacking agreements, together with increased security at airports, have reduced the number of hijackings. International anti-terrorist agreements might deal with hostage-taking, intelligence-sharing, violations of diplomatic immunity, and sanctions against countries that use or support terrorist activities outside their borders.

The issue here is not one of politics but of the traditions and laws that permit the conduct of diplomacy even among adversaries. Assaults on the diplomatic community are increasing, as is the sometimes blatant government use of terrorist groups and tactics against domestic and foreign foes abroad. These trends have created a consensus among responsible nations that terrorism does threaten international order and must be combated. International agreements could and should be sought immediately. An agreement aimed at reaffirming diplomatic immunity could call for diplomatic isolation of nations that are truly negligent in providing security for diplomats and embassies; that align themselves with those who seize embassies (e.g., Iran); or that fail to prosecute or extradite terrorists. An agreement aimed at the governments that employ terrorist groups or terrorist tactics abroad could call for sanctions against those governments.

Moments of global agreement on the matter of international terrorism are rare. We are at such a moment now. Because the world community generally supported the U.S. position in the Iranian crisis, this is the time to expand consensus and cooperation and to forge the international agreements needed to contain the terrorist threat.

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